

coming. Now is the time to move past the beltway extremists and listen to the American people. Are these tough votes? Maybe, but that's what we were sent here to do.

I want to mention Blair Holt, a Chicago high school student, son of two lifelong public servants. Blair was riding a bus, while on his way home from school, when a gun was pulled on his friend. He stepped in front of the gun and was shot to death while protecting his friend.

I ask my colleagues to think of that the next time they want to claim they can't do anything about gun violence. Blair Holt was willing to take a bullet for a friend. Shouldn't we be willing to take a tough vote for our children?

#### THE NATURALIZATION OF THE HASAN FAMILY OF MILLTOWN, NEW JERSEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues who were Members of this body some 10 years ago may recall my coming to the floor on behalf of my constituents, the Hasan family of Milltown, New Jersey—Durre, Nida, Asna, Anum, and Iqra Hasan. They lost their husband and father, Waqar Hasan, on September 15, 2001, 4 days after the tragic events of September 11. That night, an angry man walked into Waqar's convenience store in Dallas, Texas. He ordered two hamburgers and shot the 46-year-old husband and father in the face.

This was not a robbery gone awry. It was a deliberate act of hate based on Waqar's heritage and physical appearance. When asked by police why he shot Waqar, the shooter expressed no remorse. He said, "I did what every American wanted to but didn't."

When Waqar Hasan came to the United States from Pakistan in 1993, he did so in search of a better life for his family. After working in New Jersey, he took an opportunity to run a store in Texas and was going to bring his family to join him after he was established. The Hasans epitomized the hardworking, optimistic spirit that immigrants always brought to this country. They were on the path to permanent residency and, eventually, American citizenship when Waqar lost his life for no other reason than that he was a Muslim and that the murderer thought Waqar had a Middle Eastern face.

It looked at that time as if Waqar's death ended the family's path to citizenship. The widow and four school-aged girls were subject to immediate deportation. After exhausting all legal and administrative options to allow Durre, Nida, Asna, Anum, and Iqra to remain in the United States, I determined that a private bill was the only possible course of action. Finally, in 2004, Congress passed and President Bush signed this private bill into law,

giving the family a path to their dream. A few weeks ago, the Hasans took the oath of U.S. citizenship in our New Jersey congressional office. These five remarkable women had endured a long, arduous pathway from tragedy to citizenship. They formally tied their futures to the United States of America.

In a real sense, though, this naturalization ceremony was about the United States of America as much as it was about these five women. These five women were tied to America long before they took their oaths. They considered themselves Americans, and the United States of America had an obligation to them for many years.

At the ceremony, we saw hope coming out of tragedy—a fair result out of an insane injustice—and compassionate concern out of impersonal laws and regulations. The United States intends to provide and strives to give hope, fairness, and compassion, but these are not automatic. Cruel fate or happenstance often threatens to crush hope and opportunity. Irrational human passions and prejudices can thwart justice and fairness. The demands of life in a busy, complicated society and the exigencies of a complicated legal code can crowd out compassion.

In 2001, all across America, Americans reacted in dismay when they heard the news of the hate crime.

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When they learned that the murderer committed his brutality in retaliation for the September 11 attacks in an act of twisted patriotism, they knew it was a blot on our country. Americans felt the pangs even more deeply when they learned that Waqar Hasan left behind a struggling widow and four little girls.

For most Americans, that was the end of the story as they went back to their busy lives. They thought the wheels of justice will turn and take care of this. They didn't think about the United States' obligation to this family, nor did they consider how impersonal the law can be. On March 16, finally, hope, fairness, and compassion prevailed. It was wonderful and heartwarming.

The people of America and our government have an odd attitude toward immigration and immigrants. Often forgetting our own origins and even our own best interests, we resist diversity and even lash out at others, like ourselves, because we mistakenly think they are not like ourselves. Our country has a founding commitment and a history of openness, punctuated, I must say, with instances of rejection, bias, and hatred. The historical record is very clear that openness towards immigrants and policies of inclusion have greatly benefited us. Human prejudices sometimes break through. We see it even today. But with this oath of citizenship, the aspirations of Waqar Hasan for his family were realized.

We mustn't forget that year by year over the centuries, the United States of

America has moved by means of laws to overcome these prejudices of humans and the impersonal forces of society to create an opportunity and to create fairness.

We must lift our lamp by the golden door, but also keep the door and our hearts open.

#### WHAT KIND OF COUNTRY ARE WE BECOMING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Houston Chronicle reports today that a proud father announced over his Facebook page that his baby was born. The baby was born on April 14, 2012. The baby weighed 6 pounds, 15 ounces, and was 20 inches long. He was a proud father announcing the arrival of his baby.

I regret to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Chronicle goes on to report that yesterday the mother of this child, while taking the child in to receive medical attention, was killed. A proud father announces the arrival of his baby, and the mother is killed days later.

What kind of country are we becoming? I don't know what the motive is for this, but I do know the results. I know that a baby will not have its natural mother there to care and to nurture. I know that the mother won't be there on the first day of school, won't be there to see the first step that the child will take. The mother won't be there to turn on the light and protect the child from the creatures of the night, to pitch the ball and catch the child after a fall. I don't know what the motive was, but I know that a mother won't be there when the child walks across the stage to graduate from high school, when the child is married, and the first child is born to the next generation. The mother won't be there.

Regardless as to what the motive is, we must stop this senseless violence. I don't know what the race of the perpetrator was, but I do know that people of goodwill want to see this person prosecuted, and I want to see this person prosecuted to the fullest extent that the law permits. This senseless violence has to stop.

Prosecution alone won't do it. I think we do have to say more and do more, and let the country know that this is not the America that we see in our future. We have got to condemn all of this senseless violence. This senseless violence goes beyond race. It goes beyond status. This senseless violence has to be denounced by every one of us, and every one of us tries to do it as regularly as we can. I just want to join the choir of people who are saying that we will not tolerate it, we demand prosecution, and we understand that we must end this foolishness. Because if we don't end it, it will be our end.